MODERN ART

1919 SERIES

The Columbus Gallery
of Fine Arts

The Columbus Gallery
of Fine Arts

DISCARDED BY
THE
PACKARD LIBRARY

MODERN ART

1919 Series

A COLLECTION OF WORKS IN MODERN ART

Text by CHARLES MARRIOTT and "TIS"

ISSUED BY "COLOUR MAGAZINE"

COLOUR LTD.
53, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.
NEW YORK, F.A. STOKES COMPANY

THE PACKARD LIBRARY

OF THE COLUMBUS GALLERY OF FINE ARTS
AND THE COLUMBUS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

LIST OF PLATES

IN COLOUR

Plate		
I.	Dod Proctor	"A Young Girl"
II.	John Nash	"A Gloucestershire Landscape"
III.	S. B. de la Bere	"The Toilet"
IV.	Take Sato	"After the Snow"
V.	Hal Hurst	"The Young Russian"
VI.	S. J. Peploe	"Still Life"
VII.	H. Fidler	"Peace"
VIII.	Ethel Walker	"The Card Table"
IX.	Malcolm M. Milne	"The Flight into Egypt"
X.	Anne Estelle Rice	"Still Life"
XI.	Alfred J. Bennett	"The Six Ricks"
XII.	John Noble	"On the Plage"
XIII.	J. D. Fergusson	"The White Hat"
XIV.	Robert P. Bevan	"The Hansom Cab"
XV.	E. Beatrice Bland	"Abbotsbury, Dorset"
XVI.	Paul Henry	"Achill Women"
XVII.	Henry Lamb	"The Girl of the Fields"
XVIII.	P. Bertieri	"Jeune Femme Rousse"
XIX.	Gerald Moira	"The Third Green, Royal Cinque Golf Club"
XX.	Lamorna Birch	"The Ridge"
XXI.	Henry Tonks	"The Torn Gown"
XXII.	Lucien Pissarro	"The Allotments Green, East Knoyle"
XXIII.	Walter Sickert	"La Rue Cousin, Dieppe"
XXIV.	Ambrose MacEvoy	"Helen Morris in 'London Pride'"
XXV.	W. G. de Glehn	"Le Chiffre d'Amour"
XXVI.	E. McKnight Kauffer	"Landscape"
XXVII.	Roger Fry	"Poinsettia"
XXVIII.	P. Wilson Steer	"Landscape"
XXIX.	Reginald Frampton	"Flora of the Fells"
XXX.	C. F. Barry	"A Summer's Night in a Garden"

The Columbus Gallery
of Fine Arts

394

LIST OF PLATES—*(continued)*

Plate		
XXXI.	Ruth Hollingsworth	"A Breconshire Village"
XXXII.	J. Quinn	"Bessy"
XXXIII.	H. Davis Richter	"Azaleas"
XXXIV.	F. J. Kell	"In Britain's Riviera"
XXXV.	Augustus E. John	"Lady Cynthia Asquith"
XXXVI.	F. E. Gröne	"Our River by Moonlight"
XXXVII.	G. L. Brockhurst	"By the Hills"
XXXVIII.	Emile Claus	"Loo. September, 1916"
XXXIX.	A. J. Munnings	"Horse and Jockey"
XL.	Allan Davidson	"Nude"
XLI.	Hippolyte Daeye	"The First Doll"
XLII.	David Muirhead	"The Water Mill"
XLIII.	C. J. Holmes	"Snow Showers on Malham Moor"
XLIV.	William Rothenstein	"The Old Barn at Iles Farm"
XLV.	G. W. Lambert	"Miss Helen Lawson"
XLVI.	Frank Brangwyn	"Decoration"
XLVII.	E. M. Garner	"Winter Trees"
XLVIII.	Charles Shannon	"Portrait of Lillah McCarthy"

IN BLACK

Plate		
I.	E. Blampied	"Driving Home in the Rain"
II.	Raymond McIntyre	"Eve"
III.	William Shackleton	"The Shepherd"
IV.	G. L. Brockhurst	"Anais"
V.	J. D. Fergusson	"L'Amer"
VI.	E. M. Henderson	(Chalk Drawing)
VII.	Augustus John	"Lady Tredegar"
VIII.	C. R. W. Nevinson	"The Queue"

MODERN ART

1919 SERIES

"THIS BUSINESS, 'ART.'"

By CHARLES MARRIOTT

I.

A FRIEND of mine, a painter, and a very good painter—his work is reproduced in these pages—has a way of beginning: "Now, about this business, 'art'——" He says it with a look of perplexity, like a man who, having spent many years in the serious and successful pursuit of his occupation, still finds himself unable to explain it. And when we have talked until the small hours of the morning, my friend goes away, still with a look of perplexity, still muttering about "this business, 'art.'"

Let us sit down quietly and see if we cannot clear up some of our ideas about "this business, 'art.'" But first let us look round the subject. When a man comes to me and says, with the look of mingled pride and apology which almost invariably accompanies the assertion, "I don't know anything about art," I generally find that the real trouble is that he does not know anything about anything. Not in the sense of understanding it; though he may be full to the neck with hearsay information about a host of subjects. If he had really bottomed any one thing he would have discovered that all things and all branches of knowledge are connected at the roots, however far apart they may seem at their extremities, because they are rooted in life. He might not have studied any particular art but he would have learnt at least that art is not a thing by itself with arbitrary rules and principles but part of universal life; and that its rules and principles are only special applications of universal rules and principles.

This is not to deny the importance and advantage of special knowledge. On the contrary it is the only way to appreciate them. The more firmly you have grasped the fundamental unity of all knowledge the more clearly you see the necessity for special study of its particular branches; and the true specialist is always a man who recognises and emphasises the relationship of his specialty to everything else. Always distrust the specialist who blocks the way to his specialty by trying to make a mystery of it. Either he is not sure of himself or else he is trying to take an unfair advantage of you over the price. If he were sure of himself and wanted no more of you than the due reward of his special study he would know that the proper way to make you appreciate his value is to lead you up from the roots of the tree of knowledge and along its branches as far as your general intelligence will carry you. Then, unless you are a presumptuous fool, you will see where the specialist comes in.

The mystery of art is the mystery of life. All the rest is plain sailing. There is nothing very wonderful about the ramification of the twigs of the tree of knowledge; the wonder is in the germination of the seed. My friend's perplexity about "this business, 'art,'" is really perplexity about "this business, 'life,'"—as he would be the first to admit if you asked him. His difficulty is with universal rules and principles; about their special application to the business of art he will give you the clearest information in the most matter-of-fact way.

During the war I amused myself by noting journalistic "howlers" about art. I do not mean howlers in fact for, as a rule, the modern journalist is accurate in his facts, but as to the bearing of the facts. First of

all there was all that discussion about whether or not the artist should be exempted from fighting. If it had rested upon the question whether or not able-bodied young men should go on painting pictures instead of fighting it would have been a practical discussion, with something to be said on both sides; but it nearly always turned upon the question of the intrinsic value of art, and that was where the fun came in. Some said that art was the most important thing in the world, others that it was of no consequence at all; others, again, "hedged" and said that art was justified if it concerned itself with the war—went into khaki, so to speak. The simple truth is that art is important because you can't stop it, any more than you can stop digestion—though you may find it necessary to go without your regular meals for a season. As for the idea that art was justified in wartime if it went into khaki it would be quite easy to argue the contrary; that the wartime value of art was in proportion as it concerned itself with subjects of a peaceful character; and I believe that most soldiers would be of that opinion.

When it was found that artists were giving a very good account of themselves in the war there were all sorts of amusing attempts to explain it away. So-and-so did paint pictures, of course, but then he was really a cricketer, or a motorist, or at any rate a public school man; or his pictures were of a sort that appeal to the man in the street. There was nothing of the long-haired crowd about him. Well, Gaudier-Brzeska was hardly an idol of the man in the street; and a dear friend of mine who was distinguished not only for bravery but for practical ability as a soldier emphatically belonged to the long-haired crowd. He was King's Road Chelsea and the Café Royal incarnate.

These men were not exceptions nor, of course, was the explaining away due to lack of generosity. It was due to the fixed conviction that art, *qua* art, is a morbid thing and that the artist, *qua* artist, must be a bit of a softy. I found a good illustration of a similar belief among the by-the-way notes of a newspaper. The writer described how, travelling by the Tube, he was startled —and apparently shocked—at seeing a man in khaki carrying a little bunch of wild flowers. Then he looked again and saw that the man was a conscientious objector—which, according to the writer, explained everything. Now anybody whose ideas of soldiers and conscientious objectors were not formed by the comic papers would know that nobody would be more likely to carry wild flowers than the genuine fighting man on leave; while the conscientious objector would be much more likely to be carrying a pamphlet of the last patent religion—unless, indeed, as is quite possible, he was only a genuine fighting man with a bee in his bonnet.

Another misunderstanding of art brought out by the war was confusing it with commerce. When the Linnell collection of Blake drawings was sold at Christies I came upon about half a column devoted to the subject in one of the leading daily newspapers. The writer began with some perfunctory remarks about Blake's importance as an artist and a seer; and then, with an apology for having touched upon that side of the matter at a time of stress and paper shortage, went on to fill the rest of his half-column with details of the prices fetched by Blake drawings at earlier sales. Of course he may have been a specialist in sales; it was the apology that damned him. This, too, at a time when events have so vindicated what Blake stood for that I have heard it seriously proposed that one of his poems should be used as a National Anthem. Though even so enlightened a writer as Henry James seems to have been a bit hazy in his mind about the distinction between art and commerce. The plot of his novel, "The Outcry," hangs upon the threatened

loss to the nation of a certain Italian painting in a private collection. Then it is discovered that the painting is by a much rarer master than had been supposed—and immediately the outcry against its threatened loss is redoubled. Surely it must be evident that the only artistic loss to the nation—which was the point of the story—depended upon the intrinsic merit of the work, whoever painted it.

I am not sure that we do not make too much of the possession of masterpieces on any grounds. In comparison with anything that checks or perverts the artistic impulse of a nation it would not matter if all the masterpieces in the country were destroyed. A work of art is only the end of the reaction, and it is the reaction itself that matters. It may be said that the presence of masterpieces encourages and guides the artistic impulse. That is true, but the direct action of masterpieces is, after all, limited to a comparatively small number of persons; and the more effective encouragement and guidance of the artistic impulse of a nation is lower down; in social, economical and industrial conditions. I would even go so far as to say that the presence of masterpieces—of pictures even—may encourage a false conception of art; but of that later.

Yet another misunderstanding of art exposed by the war was the confusion between refreshment and education. This came out at the closing of the museums and galleries. The discussion aroused reminded one of nothing so much as of the bishop's advice to the curate: "Always state your convictions; in nine cases out of ten they will be right. Never state your reasons; in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they will be wrong." Most of the protesters relied on their weakest argument: the immediately practical utility of galleries and museums. In a sense their practical utility can hardly be over-estimated, but for immediate results they cannot be compared with the workshop. No doubt the argument was prompted by the sort of intelligence addressed; that of the so-called "practical man"; but it is questionable if, in the long run, any cause is helped by misrepresentation. It is as if you pleaded in favour of religion the undeniable truth that it helps washerwomen by encouraging clean collars on Sunday. In view of the incalculable benefits to humanity, to him that gives and him that takes, of art and literature nobody who cares for them should submit to any cheapening of their claims. "Take it or leave it" is the only dignified attitude.

On the whole, too, the people who cared for art and literature did take up that attitude. At the time of the threatened Luxury Tax on books there was, it is true, a half-hearted attempt to plead for a distinction between what somebody called the literature of power and the literature of information; that is to say to accept the tax on books which keep the soul alive and claim exemption for "books which are not books," in Lamb's immortal phrase; but the attempt soon died of its own imbecility. And it is to the honour of such bodies as the Royal Academy that they never pleaded for exemption from the Entertainments' Tax. I do not mean that submission to the tax was specially "patriotic," but that it showed a proper pride. Better be classed with the penny gaff than submit to any attempt to discriminate between "serious" and "frivolous" art; an attempt which would inevitably place a solemn daub in the first category and a caricature by Mr. Max Beerbohm in the second. Though, indeed, the Academy *may* have felt flattered at being officially stamped entertaining.

Most pathetic of all, perhaps, is the misconception of art by artists themselves. Thus I have known a man rail at water-colour painting who was himself a pretty bat. If he could only have understood that, granting their different aims, cricket and water-colour painting are only special

applications according to the medium employed of the same universal rules and principles, he would have understood the nature of art, and ceased to rail.

At the beginning of this chapter I said that we would look round the subject of art. Enough has been said to show that you cannot look round it, because it is co-extensive with life itself. The difficulties of art are the difficulties of life; and that is why, it seems to me, most of our attempted definitions of art are worthless. We get too far away from our base—human nature. In trying to understand "this business, 'art'" we pursue our investigations too exclusively among the terminal twigs of the tree, and neglect the main branches, trunk and roots. It is true that art can only be studied in works of art, but in considering them it is necessary to remember the impulse and methods involved in their creation; and we shall not form sound conceptions of art unless we keep the way open from the work of art back to the artist, from the specialised artist back to the craftsman in the broader sense of the word, and from him back to the common stock of humanity. Somebody defined man as a tool-using animal; and I seriously believe that a person without special artistic training will get sounder ideas about art from his experience as a carpenter, gardener, or golfer than from pictures alone. The elements of art are man and materials; and it is from and through the reactions between them that the whole range of art, from the mud cabin to the masterpiece of painting, is produced.

II.

FROM what has gone before it is hardly necessary to say that I shall not attempt a new definition of art. I would as soon attempt a new definition of of life or love. It will be enough for our purpose to say that art is a persistent human activity, in some degree almost universal, with consequences that range from cottage furniture to poems, pictures and statues. For convenience we may make a distinction between domestic and fine arts, between work and play; but the distinction is only a convenience, and last year's game of cricket is as much a work of art as to-day's picture. To judge the nature of art from its consequences alone is to make the mistake of the hasty child in the moral tale who made a garden by sticking full-blown flowers in the soil. His wiser companion gave his attention to little brown roots. In a few days the first garden was faded out of existence, but in a few months the second was all ablow.

But although all the arts have a common origin they quickly assume different characters according to the materials used in them. Not only that, but the pictorial arts, with which we are chiefly concerned here, are subject to a division which all the others—except sculpture—escape. The effects of this division are so profound and perplexing that it is worth while to consider them at length. Music and poetry are comparatively simple problems. Whether good, bad or indifferent, grave or gay, they are practised and understood without more than a complimentary reference to what is called "nature." Within the limits of probability they stand or fall by the treatment of the materials used in them: musical sounds and articulate language. Some people may like their music or their poetry to make the complimentary reference to nature more explicit than others, but, in the long run, everybody approaches music or poetry from the side of the medium.

In the pictorial arts—and to a less degree in sculpture—the case is different. From the very beginning they branch off into two distinct tendencies: one practised, understood and judged from the side of the medium, with a complimentary reference to nature; and the other practised, understood and judged from the side of nature,

with a complimentary reference to the medium. There is no need here to go over the old quarrels between "representation" and "expression," between "realistic" and "decorative" painting. Nor is it any use trying to decide which is right or the better of the two. They proceed from two different conceptions of the art and are probably dependent upon deep psychological differences; and the reason why the effects are obvious in the pictorial arts as they are not in music and poetry is not that the mental differences are not equally represented in the creation of music and poetry but that the materials of those arts do not, like the materials of drawing and painting, lend themselves to enlistment in either camp indifferently. Try as you will you cannot make musical sounds or words "like" nature in any but a formal or symbolical sense.

Nor, in the pictorial arts, is it much use expecting a final reconciliation between the two schools—as we may call them for convenience. Their actual productions may and do resemble each other; the most realistic painter, if he is a painter worth the name, will recognise the character of his medium and, on the other hand, the most exclusive craftsman can hardly avoid some reference to nature.

A moments reflection will show that this apparent anomaly, of similar results from different creeds, is not peculiar to art. It is the commonest thing in life to find two people doing similar things for opposite reasons. "By their works ye shall know them" is a great truth, but it needs to be applied with caution if we are not to misjudge our fellow creatures. In art, at any rate, it will be a great help to understanding if we try to discover in which belief the work was conceived; whether primarily as an interpretation of nature or as a design in paint—with reference to nature, maybe.

The distinction may seem fanciful, but from observation and from talking to painters of many different kinds I am convinced that it is real and important; and that it explains a great deal that would otherwise be perplexing. There is a whole class of persons for whom love of nature is the real inspiration of art, and for whom the material is a secondary consideration, though they may treat it with intelligence and sympathy; and, on the other hand, there is a large class of persons for whom the stuff itself is the inspiration of art, and nature is only a "dictionary," as Mr. Eric Gill called it. To critise the works of one by the standards of the other is manifestly unfair. Apart from all questions of individuality it seems to me that we need two distinct standards of criticism in the pictorial arts; indeed, one might almost say that there are two distinct arts of painting, often approximating in result but entirely different in motive, to which the descriptions of "realistic" and "decorative" do not correspond.

I said that it was no use trying to decide which was the better of the two, but I can hardly help thinking that the inspiration of the stuff is the sounder motive. One thing that seems to suggest that it is the sounder motive is the anxiety of nature worshippers to prove their respect for craftsmanship. "There's paint for you," they say; and "what do you want broader than that?". But you never hear the craftsman claiming as a merit in his work that it is like nature. He regards that question as irrelevant. Nor will he, like the interpreter of nature, concede that their interests are really the same.

III.

THAT brings me to an analogy in the field of economics so striking that it cannot be ignored. When you talk to a supporter of the capitalistic organisation of industry he nearly always tries to persuade you that the capitalist is also a labourer, and that the interests of capital and labour are the same; but

you never hear a supporter of the labour organisation of industry arguing that the labourer is also a capitalist or that the interests of labour and capital are the same. He knows that they are and must be opposed, though they are capable of infinite adjustments for smooth working.

In exactly the same way the man who believes in the organisation of art with reference to nature always appeals, in the last resort, to his merits as a craftsman; while the man who believes in the organisation of art through the stuff is content to let it go at that.

Now it does not do to push analogies too far, but I believe that if you examined the economical opinions of a number of artists you would find that, speaking generally, the nature men inclined to the capitalistic and the craftsmen to the labour organisation of industry. This, if true, as I think it is, seems to me natural enough; for the control and organisation of art on the basis of craftsmanship and of industry on the basis of labour are obviously similar conceptions. Both start from the ground, so to speak; whereas the control and organisation of art with reference to nature, and of industry with reference to capital, are both "overhead" conceptions, formed in the region of ideas and aims rather than from direct contact with the stuff and humanity; and the stuff in the one case and labour in the other, though they may be treated sympathetically, are apt to be regarded as raw material to be exploited—using the word with an inoffensive meaning.

When and why "nature" and capital first intruded into art and industry respectively is rather too big a subject to handle here; but undoubtedly both intrusions were connected with the rapid rise of a class of intelligent and cultivated people unversed in materials and untrained to labour. Instead of remaining the provinces of craftsmen, in their different degrees of skill, exclusively, art and industry became the playgrounds of the man with "ideas." In the one case you got the "artist," ready to design anything, from a uniform to an altar-piece, without stopping to master the materials used in it, and in the other the speculative capitalist, ready to control any industry, from agriculture to engineering, without troubling his head about the human capacities involved in the work. They produced some brilliant results, but in the long run, the effects upon both art and industry have been for the worse. As the divorce between the studio or office and the workshop grew wider one "overhead" activity played into the hands of the other; and the artist, who had already lost touch with the needs of common life, ceased even to depend upon definite commissions from wealthy patrons, and adapted his methods to those of the speculative capitalist, until pictures became a sort of stocks and shares. Incidentally, both the men and materials of craftsmanship gradually sank to the level of machine-fodder.

IV.

ONE remarkable consequence of the "overhead" organisation of art, with reference to nature and the market instead of on the basis of materials and the needs of life, was the art exhibition. Paradoxical as it may sound, the existence of art exhibitions is presumptive evidence of a comparatively low condition of art. Even the separate picture gallery in the stately home was a step in the wrong direction, because art is a thing to be lived with, not looked at occasionally. You cannot think of art exhibitions in ancient Greece, or mediæval Europe, or China, or in any time or place when or where art was really flourishing; though then and there as here and now an artist who had finished a piece of work might very well invite his friends and possible patrons to look at it in his own studio.

The Columbus Gallery

Still, exhibitions are here, and if we want to know anything about contemporary art they cannot be neglected. Nor is it any use blaming artists for art exhibitions. They result, as I said, from thinking of art as an affair of nature and the market instead of an affair of materials and the home. Even the most exemplary craftsman can hardly avoid exhibitions, nowadays, if he wants to live by his work. The truth is that you cannot separate art from economics; put one upon an unsound basis and the other follows; and there is no surer evidence that Ruskin was a good art critic than that he spent so much of his time writing about political and social economy. Right or wrong in his judgments and conclusions he saw where the shoe pinched.

Leaving out Ruskin, as belonging to all time, there is nothing more illuminating than the art criticism of the last century. The reference is always either to nature or to history; never to craftsmanship—except in such elementary questions as whether a line was straight or crooked, or a tone too light or too dark, or a colour too hot or too cold. From a technical point of view the criticism amounted to nothing more than pointing out mistakes of grammar or spelling in a writer. It never seems to have occurred to the critic that a picture, whatever the subject, might be primarily a structure in paint as a table, whatever the design, is primarily a structure in wood, with a definite purpose in view. So far as we can judge the critic never looked beyond the exhibition for the purpose of the picture; as if you thought of a coat as designed to hang for ever in a wardrobe.

Undoubtedly, too, the critic was justified. The great majority of the pictures *had* no purpose but to simulate nature skilfully at an exhibition according to the demands of the market. They corresponded exactly to the more practical wares produced by the capitalistic control of industry; they were for sale, not use, and the wonder would be that they were often so good if we did not know that the craftsman's instinct is about the most persistent of all human virtues, and that the real tragedy of labour is the survival of a conscience for the job in the condition of machine-fodder.

The reaction from this view of art—and industry—is now so firmly established, though still entirely unorganised on the economic side, that we can afford to look at its surviving examples with equanimity. Broadly speaking, the pictures in any modern exhibition can be divided into two categories: a majority that, whatever their merits in craftsmanship, really stand or fall by their likeness to nature, and a minority that from their first conception are exercises in paint for some decorative or emotional end in connection with the needs of daily life; leaving the degree of likeness to nature to be determined entirely by the sympathetic and characteristic use of the material employed in them, and their final application to the purpose for which they were designed.

Each category must be judged according to its kind; and there are certain conclusions to be drawn which may help to clear up our ideas about "this business, 'art.'" One is that, if likeness to nature be the standard, the less nature is tampered with the better. That is to say, if the artist sets out to "interpret nature," beyond a reasonable respect for his medium it is better that he should confine his "interpretation" to invention or choice or arrangement of subject. You cannot have it both ways; and if you accept nature as your criterion you must limit your claims in the direction of "breadth" or "handling." Most of the popular objections to impressionism are well-founded. In anything like an impression of nature paint must be strictly subdued if it is not to be a disturbing factor; and if you claim to "see nature like that" you lay yourself open to the just retort that there must be something the matter with your eyes. Equally well-founded is the

popular demand for "story" in subject pictures, topographical accuracy in landscapes, and literal "likeness" in portraits that accept the nature standard of painting. Whether you like it or not, the most legitimate opportunity in this conception of art is illustration; and that is why Hogarth is justly regarded as one of the glories of the British school; why Frith, according to his lights, was a better artist than is commonly supposed, and also why academic excursions into "modernity" are generally not an improvement. They merely compromise one belief without accepting another.

To return to our exhibition—though we have not really left it—the smaller category of works that are based on craftsmanship may justly claim a much wider freedom. At lowest they will be careful exercises in paint, and at highest they can adventure into the fullest reaches of imagination. Their approach to nature can be distant or close, because they hold on to paint all the time; and the liberties with the forms and colours of nature that we object to in works that profess to be true to nature are readily conceded them because they only profess to be true to paint. To take a crude illustration, if a man sets out to make a landscape in coloured tiles, he is justified in reducing trees to rectangular forms. All we ask is that the modification or distortion shall explain itself by the means employed.

Moreover, these works, though suffering the exhibition disadvantage of being shown out of their context are, unlike the others, obviously ready to resume it again; because a thing that confesses the material in which it is made is at once on friendly terms with all other materials. In cold blood, it is much more important that a picture shall "go with the furniture" than that it shall be like nature; and there is no escape from the truth of the old saying that painting is a branch of architecture.

This essay does not pretend to be anything more than an attempt to clear the ground; to explain "this business, 'art,'" not as an esoteric something with arbitrary rules invented by professors, but as a refinement of labour, subject to the same hindrances and perversions. Art *is* esoteric, of course, but so is labour; as anybody must know who can remember his emotions as a boy with a jack-knife. There is nothing in human life more secret than the way of a man with a tool, and there is good reason why the description "art and mystery" still survives in trade certificates. The true interpretation of nature is by way of craftsmanship; letting nature speak through the materials with the accent and intonation peculiar to each; and the highest possibilities of art in the direction of worship are summed up in the story of the Juggler of Notre Dame.

You cannot keep up a sound tradition of craftsmanship on nice ideas about nature and the chances of the market; sooner or later either nature or the market, or both, will get between the two elements of craftsmanship—man and materials. The problem of art is a labour question; and the true antithesis between the two views of art, as between the capitalistic and labour views of industry, is that between exploitation and expression. The older I get the more convinced I am that that is the true antithesis in most human affairs, from individual to international relations. Certainly the two ideals of government lately opposed in arms were those of exploitation or expression of the people governed.

Relative distribution of profits has very little to do with the business. Quite a good case could be made out for the capitalistic system by saying that in comparison with its achievement, the creation of surplus wealth, man and materials don't matter; quite a good case could be made out for the exploitation ideal of government by saying that in comparison with its achievement, national power, individual consent doesn't matter; and quite a good case could be made out for the nature view of art by

saying that in comparison with its achievement, lofty illustration, craftsmanship doesn't matter; but you cannot have it both ways. Sooner or later you have to choose between exploitation and expression as an ideal.

There is no need for the choice, or its effects, to be catastrophic. The opposition between the capitalistic and labour views of industry, and the nature and craftsmanship views of art, is definite and vital; but any attempt to draw a hard and fast line between "capitalists" and "labourers," or "artists" and "craftsmen," is absurd. More often than not they are the same person. The choice is not as between class and class, but for the individual as between two aspects of himself; whether to bank upon his function as capitalist or as labourer, as "artist" or as craftsman. What will probably happen in industry is what is already happening in art; a reconsideration of the subject from the bottom instead of from the top; from the point of view of humanity and the stuff instead of from that of æsthetic or economic theories. If the present controller of industry learnt to act in the capacity of master-craftsman instead of in that of capitalist the capitalistic system would be superseded without any drastic change of ownership or personnel.

One of the practical consequences of banking on craftsmanship in art may conveniently be considered at the end of this essay. Among the many well-intended plans for what is called "reconstruction" is that for the provision of more picture galleries. Undoubtedly any fine works of the past that we happen to possess ought to be worthily housed; but, in view of the present and future, the question is whether a picture gallery is not a perversion of the subject. That is what I meant by saying that the presence of masterpieces may encourage a false conception of art. It is quite certain that these masterpieces were not painted for exhibition in picture galleries. They were painted for churches and palaces, to form an integral part of the worship or the life conducted in them. If we are to benefit by our masterpieces we must get back to something like the conditions for which they were painted.

Really, the more you look into it the more you see that you cannot think of art as a separate subject. There is something delightfully funny in the fact that the persons who are always advising our young artists to study the Old Masters are generally the same persons who support the system which makes the work of the Old Masters absolutely meaningless. The picture gallery view of art and the capitalistic system stand or fall together. So long as the system endures artists will be compelled to paint for exhibition and the market. Get industry as a whole on to a sound economical basis and art will take care of itself. You cannot help artists as artists, but only as tradesmen, by giving them more picture galleries and bigger prices. If you want them to paint, like the Old Masters, for craftsmanship you must give them some definite purpose in life to which their craftsmanship can be applied. What that purpose is will have to wait for another occasion.

CHARLES MARRIOTT.

Dod Proctor

"A Young Girl"

Consideration is shown in every line of this picture, and the result is not easily forgotten. It would be difficult to find a more honest piece of work. You get from it the startled sense of reality that you get from the Italian Primitives.

Plate II

S. B. de la Bere

"The Toilet"

Not more is aimed at here than a delicate artificiality. It is a "powder and puff" picture, and it must be commended for tact in arrangement and cleverness in execution.

Plate III

Take Sato

"After the Snow"

The gesture of the further headland and the placing of the birds betray the unerring instinct of the Japanese artist for design. With the most delicate materials—water-colour on silk—the full character of the season is suggested.

Plate IV

Hal Hurst

"The Young Russian"

The facility with which this is done must strike everybody, and facility has an attraction of its own. Also the model is attractive in herself. This plate will please everybody who likes a "pretty picture."

Plate V

S. J. Peploe

"Still Life"

A picture in which the balance between pure craftsmanship and actuality is perfectly kept. The textures of the various objects are sufficiently indicated, but there is no concealment of the substance of paint; a broadly synthetic style of drawing is adopted, but entirely without distortion. Altogether the picture reminds you of perfect manners in a person who is able to conform to all the usages without any loss of individuality.

Plate VI

H. Fidler

"Peace"

An interesting attempt to "find the subject in paint" and still make use of its descriptive possibilities. The treatment is purely naturalistic, but the quality of paint is not sacrificed.

Plate VII

Ethel Walker

"The Card Table"

Here is a good exercise in painting with the single preoccupation of colour values. The success of it depends entirely on the relative depth of the various notes. In a sense this sort of work might be compared to "sight-reading" in music.

Plate VIII

Malcolm M. Milne

"The Flight into Egypt"

Here we see a bold sacrifice of the accidents of natural appearance in order to arrive at essential truth. The advantage of such painting is that it allows the artist to employ the direct appeal of form and colour at its broadest while keeping near enough to the fact to avoid puzzling "abstraction."

Plate IX

Anne Estelle Rice

"Still Life"

Good still-life painting, such as this, cannot be too warmly welcomed. By eliminating all the ulterior motives which are apt to creep into pictorial art it compels the painter to concentrate his powers upon design and craftsmanship. Notice what value is given to colour by the dark outline.

Plate X

Alfred J. Bennett

"The Six Ricks"

This picture is remarkable both for its happy arrangement and for the success with which the same treatment is carried through the whole scheme. The character and quality of the different objects is sufficiently distinguished, but they are all done with the same language of the brush.

ALFRED J.
BENNETT

John Noble

"On the Plage"

This painting well shows the comparative lengths to which an artist can go in a decorative direction without resorting to arbitrary expedients. Everything, the colour scheme, the placing and relationship of the figures, and the degree of simplification, is very carefully chosen; but you cannot say that it did not "happen so."

Plate XII

J. D. Fergusson

"The White Hat"

A piece of *bravura* painting by an artist who is capable of many styles. In this particular instance he has kept pretty close to the model; but even with this comparatively realistic treatment the bold curve of the hat is repeated like a leading motive throughout the picture.

Robert P. Bevan

"The Hansom Cab"

This painter has made a reputation with a class of subject that many might have found unpromising. He manages to combine the pictorial beauty with the racy character of a Cockney institution.

E. Beatrice Bland

"Abbotsbury, Dorset"

Without departing from a realistic treatment of nature the artist has, nevertheless, contrived to be loyal to painting; and without obvious design she has by tactful arrangement or selection produced a pleasing composition. These are the merits of a system of painting which probably corresponds to the ideas of the greatest number of persons.

Plate XV

Paul Henry

"Achill Women"

Something of the grandeur of primitive life is preserved in this picture which owes not a little of its power to massive arrangement. The colours of nature are accepted at their strongest value, and paint is used frankly but without aggressiveness. The result has the forcible simplicity of dialect in literature.

Plate XVI

Henry Lamb

"The Girl of the Fields"

The arresting power of this picture is due to the sincerity with which an unusual type is portrayed. The landscape, with its suggestion of a bid for freedom, is thoroughly in harmony with the temperament, shy but untamed, which looks out of the eyes.

P. Bertieri

"Jeune Femme Rousse"

Colour is confessedly the motive of this picture; everything being designed to bring out the value of the hair. In the same way a musician might concentrate upon bringing out the tone quality of an instrument, disregarding for the moment its capacity for melody.

Plate XVIII

Gerald Moira

"The Third Green, Royal Cinque Golf Club"

The work of a painter who is exploring the decorative possibilities of modern life. Sometimes he works up the results of his observation into a formal design; sometimes, as here, he relies upon the accidents of the scene.

Plate XIX

Lamorna Birch

"The Ridge"

A fine study in the structure of landscape by a painter who is capable of both force and delicacy. Here you feel great confidence in the lie of the land, and at the same time you are exhilarated by the effect of space.

Plate XX

Henry Tonks

"The Torn Gown"

An example of the best kind of genre painting, in which point is given to good craftsmanship by human interest that is not so pronounced as to distract the attention from pictorial qualities. It might be compared to ballad music in which the words, though good in themselves, do not make a separate claim.

Plate XXI

Lucien Pissarro

"The Allotments Green, East Knoyle"

This picture is a good illustration of the modern tendency to find opportunities for art in subjects that might be called commonplace. There is in it an almost Puritanical avoidance of the picturesque in the desire to reach æsthetic results by refinement of observation and precision of statement.

Walter Sickert

"La Rue Cousin, Dieppe"

The more you look at this picture the more you will find in it. Without at any moment losing touch with his craft the painter has carried realistic truth to a point that will satisfy the person who merely wants an accurate likeness. At the same time the beauty of colour, which must strike everybody in the painting, would be overlooked by most people in the actual scene.

Ambrose MacEvoy

"Helen Morris in 'London Pride'"

Here is a picture that must please everybody. It has the charm of life, and also the pleasant artificiality of the stage; and in addition it shows the most complete freedom and sympathy in the use of the medium.

W. G. de Glehn

"Le Chiffre d'Amour"

Something of the quality of this picture is conveyed in the form of the title. Apart from skilful naturalistic painting, it owes its interest to the piquant contrast of a highly civilised type with rustic surroundings.

E. McKnight Kauffer

"Landscape"

Very simple elements are here combined into a satisfying picture. It might be an exercise to show how little is needed if a painter will accept the broad hints of nature, and rely for the rest upon the characteristic use of his materials.

Roger Fry

"Poinsettia"

This may truly be called a study in character. It is a good example of the modern attempt to see things as they are, and to paint them without prejudice. The design is worked out from the actual character of the forms, very much as a musician would work out a composition from a sequence of notes that he himself did not invent.

P. Wilson Steer

"Landscape"

Here we have a painter in full enjoyment of his craft; letting the thing "happen" as a consequence of tones well and truly planted. Conceived in paint from the beginning this picture would lose rather than gain by further finish because, then, a comparison with the actual forms of nature would begin.

Plate XXVIII

Reginald Frampton

"Flora of the Fells"

No excuse is needed for the delicate formality of this picture. Everything in it is as deliberate as the jewel in the girl's carefully braided hair. By indulging his pleasure in craftsmanship the artist has got nearer to the spirit and atmosphere of the scene than if he had aimed at them directly.

C. F. Barry

"A Summer's Night in a Garden"

An exercise in the poetry of civilisation, comparable in mood to the music of Chopin. At the same time the picture is remarkable for truth in the quality of colour revealed by moonlight.

Ruth Hollingsworth

"A Breconshire Village"

This is a kind of landscape painting that will always give satisfaction. It combines general fidelity with a sense of local character and a feeling for design—as shown by the slight emphasis upon the pattern made by the fields and the successive links of the village.

J. Quinn

"Bessy"

A slight study, owing its merit to appreciation of the freshness of the model, and directness of handling. It does not pretend to go further than it does.

H. Davis Richter

"Azaleas"

This is the work of a painter who has made a well-deserved reputation with flower studies. He seems to have the gift of building up the flower petal by petal with his brush; so that the character of the flower and the character of brushwork are achieved in the same action; and his arrangements are always pleasing.

F. J. Kell

"In Britain's Riviera"

Essentially a study in white, at the hour when white comes into its own for æsthetic purposes. But with this primary object the character of the cottages is not sacrificed, and their human associations are suggested.

Plate XXXIV

Augustus E. John

"Lady Cynthia Asquith"

This picture is particularly interesting as showing how far a master craftsman can go in freedom of drawing and breadth of painting, and still produce a recognisable and characteristic portrait. It is an excellent illustration of the truth that if you are true to art you will not fail in respect for nature.

F. E. Gröne

"Our River by Moonlight"

As the possessive form of the title seems to indicate, this is an affectionate impression with a sentimental bias. It has the defects of its qualities, but it succeeds in suggesting atmosphere.

Plate XXXVI

G. L. Brockhurst

"By the Hills"

Whether regarded as a portrait or as an interpretation of the spirit of place this picture leaves a satisfying impression. Nothing is forced, but a touch of remoteness is conveyed by the look and gesture of the child, and the arrangement shows considerable science.

Emile Claus

"Loo. September, 1916"

This picture reminds you of something said with wet eyes and a voice that trembles a little. Anger at the cause of the ruin is for the moment forgotten in tenderness over the place. Apparently it is in pastel, and the way the medium is handled adds not a little to its emotional quality.

Lee
8 Sept 1916

A. J. Munnings

"Horse and Jockey"

The work of this painter shows the combination of special knowledge of sport with technical skill that is almost peculiar to the British School. You feel that the picture would satisfy a racing man, apart from its merits as a painting.

Plate XXXIX

Allan Davidson

"Nude"

An effort in line, in the sense in which Ingres understood the subject. Everything is subordinated to the succession of curves from shoulder to foot.

Plate XL

Hippolyte Daeye

"The First Doll"

An exercise in pale tones from which the subject emerges with just the right amount of definition. More explicit "drawing" would have been out of keeping with the elusive character of the motive.

David Muirhead

"The Water Mill"

An example of the typically British school of landscape painting that derives from Constable. No school has approached nearer to the actual "feel" of Nature; and when, as here, the realisation of conditions is combined with sound craftsmanship the results are admirable.

Plate XLII

C. J. Holmes

"Snow Showers on Malham Moor"

A good example of the synthetic treatment of landscape, in which by slight emphasis and simplification the main character of a scene is brought out to the disregard of minor accidents. Apart from the gain in coherence of design the result is more memorable than would be a more direct impression.

Plate XLIII

William Rothenstein

"The Old Barn at Iles Farm"

Essentially this picture is a tribute from a painter to a builder. Throughout it there is keen appreciation of that structural fitness which is so much more satisfying than architectural ornament. "Reverence" is not too strong a word for the spirit in which the painter has done his work.

G. W. Lambert

"Miss Helen Lawson"

A brilliant piece of painting, the character of everything, from the curves of the face to the folds of the kerchief, being determined by the play of the brush in the hands of a man who was evidently "tickled all the time," as Americans would say. There is about the whole treatment a sharp "antiseptic" flavour, admirably in keeping with the subject.

Frank Brangwyn

"Decoration"

Physical enjoyment of painting is revealed in this composition of ripe forms and rich colours. It is like a song in paint to material beauty. Few modern painters get so much temperament into their work with so little effort as Mr. Brangwyn. He expresses himself in paint as another man does in easy conversation.

E. M. Garner

"Winter Trees"

One has only to think of a photograph of this scene to see where painting "scores." The selection of and slight emphasis upon leading lines giving coherence from both a structural and a decorative point of view. The broken tones of the sky in contrast with the smooth shadows on the grass is a very happy expedient.

Charles Shannon

"Portrait of Lillah McCarthy"

This picture shows what a fine thing a costume study can be. It includes both human character and an appreciation of surfaces and textures that might almost be called religious. One has to go back to the great Venetians to find such a poetic enjoyment of material things.

"SOME ASPECTS OF MODERN ART."

By "TIS."

I.

THE volume at this moment in the hands of the reader resembles life; it contains a variety of interesting things apparently without order or sequence. What happens to be present and what happens to be absent from it has happened. The inclusion of one, the exclusion of another modern picture is not due to critical preference, but to the very sound principle of leaving it to the public to make their own choice of preference from a wealth of material. So one may say that modern artists are responsible for this book, and modern writers for the opinions expressed in it. This has one very great advantage: it does not absolve the reader from the necessity of doing his own thinking, of arranging the ideas pictorial and literary, so that they will fit into the order of his microcosm. There is no unfairness to the artists represented in this, since every picture is or should be a unity, a more or less complete embodiment of an emotion or a thought, and so fairly to be judged on its own merits. The disadvantage is, however, with the writer. Modern Art is not an organic unity, yet a literary essay on that subject might reasonably be expected to be a complete thing, a unity in itself; well constructed with a beginning, a main middle and a fitting end. By putting up a thesis and illustrating it with a selection of pictures in support it would have been possible to achieve a literary unity. As it is, the present writer, at all events, feels as if he were asked to comment upon the waters of a flowing river at a given spot; he must begin where there is no commencement, dwell where there is no rest, and finish where there is no ending. The reader will therefore have to treat these pages much as he must treat the sequence of the pictures: that is to say, he must look upon them as a truly "running comment," eddying round and about, away from and back to the little point of observation, the little arbitrary section of that vast flowing river called Modern Art.

II.

"THE average spectator is unable to differentiate his literary and associative emotions from his æsthetic ecstasy. Form and rhythm alone are the bases of æsthetic enjoyment: all else in a picture is superfluity." I quote this from Willard Huntington Wright's book, "Modern Painting," because it claims to be not only complete, and comprehensive, and authentic, but also because it really makes one understand the soil out of which the most modern form of modern art has grown. Everyone would agree of course that rhythm and form (perhaps) are the bases of æsthetic enjoyment, but that would destroy the whole case; the *bases* have therefore to be made exclusive of all else, which all includes not only literary but also associative emotions. The basis is deprived of its superstructure, and proclaimed as the only essential part of the whole building. That is to say if we acknowledged, for example, that in Rubens's art, fat, fair, feminine, Flemish flesh, rich and voluminous draperies, scintillating armour, allegorical allusion gave an *ensemble* of exuberant vitality, joy in life, regal splendour, and historic interest, on a basis of rhythmic form, we should proclaim ourselves average

spectators. Yet can form manifest itself except in an object? Can an object be realised except by association? Can ecstasy be produced except it be incited by association? We know what Wright is driving at, and we shall presently see where the mistake is; but the protagonists of the abstract theory of art are driven to all manner of queer subterfuges in order to maintain their theories. Mr. Wright in his attempt to point out the fallacies of the "Neo-Impressionists," who, according to him "hold that horizontal lines give calm, ascending lines, joy; descending lines sorrow," is driven to say "But while a line placed horizontally may represent calm, the same line made perpendicular or laid at an angle of forty-five degrees will also produce calm. The straight line varies so little in its significance, no matter at what angle it is placed that its direction is negligible from an emotional standpoint. The *degree of curve* in a line is its emotional element....." and so forth. Let us be quite clear at the outset that there is no emotional element in any line of any description: the emotional element is in us, is regulated by the association of ideas it evokes in us. If the "Neo-impressionists" speak of ascending and descending lines they cannot mean a geometrical and isolated abstraction, since there is nothing in a geometrical line to indicate direction. The emotion the straight line arouses will very much depend on the circumstances, in the literal sense of the word, on its environment. A horizontal line of the length of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch will call forth a different emotion from a line of $\frac{1}{16}$ of a mile. But in any case the horizontal being associatively the line which delimits the horizon, and consequently the base upon which we rest is necessarily more significant of calm than a line leaning at 45° because we feel an associative difficulty in resting at such an angle, or in clinging to such a line without a visible means of support. In the same way the degree of a curve has no emotional significance, *per se*, it assumes significance, strictly in accordance with the associations it evokes, and these depend to a great extent on the life experiences, and may be on pre-natal influences of the spectator.

"To the great artist an object exists as a volume with which to fill a given space. He completely forgets its *raison d'être* in life, and views it only as a means for tightening a pictures order."

That sounds true, but it will not bear the test of experience. If an artist in his endeavour to "tighten a picture's order" departs too palpably from the proportions of a "volume's," say an arm's, or a body's, or a group's *raison d'être* in life, he causes in the spectator a feeling at least of personal discomfort which mars æsthetic emotion.

Modern art in its most modern "isms" has quite obviously completely forgotten the *raison d'être* of objects in life. What it needs, however, is not censure; we must not say with Wright: "For centuries painting has been reared on a false foundation, and the criteria of æsthetic appreciation have been irrelevant." Everything that is or ever has been is reared upon "true" foundations, the criteria according to which the foundations have been laid and the superstructure raised, being due to an inevitable association of ideas. In the very act of maintaining that the foundations were false Mr. Wright is driven to say that the criteria were irrelevant, but the foundations could only be truly *false* if the criteria had been relevant. He cannot have it both ways: One cannot indict the past because it does not fit in with the present. Art as everything else happens in life according to the association of ideas which prevail at any given moment, and must be judged accordingly. Art does not happen in a vacuum of absolute æsthetic laws, laws by which *true* art may be separated from *false*, or authentic art from inauthentic. The fact remains that the

lesser artists copy and imitate the great artists, and the great artists the men who have a message, who have something to say, who desire to give utterance, who in a word create, act through a faculty which they possess but cannot command. The error into which so many minds persist in falling, is to imagine that we can understand the great "why" of life, when all that we are capable of is to realise its "how." We know *how* electricity functions, and we can use it accordingly; we know not why it should so function: all our endeavour to hide our ignorance behind scientific verbiage cannot alter that. It is the same with the cause of emotion and the exponents of causal art, *i.e.*, an art which pretends to create emotion on scientific principles are deceiving no one but themselves: they might as well attempt to construct a viviparous flying machine.

In other words, though the purpose of God's creation may be within itself; the purpose of man's creation, viz., the purpose of art is *outside* art, just as the purpose of engineering is outside engineering, or the purpose of poetry—despite the fellows who foam at the pen, what time they are not gnawing the holder for ideas—is outside poetry. Even in music the purpose is outside. In all the arts the purpose is a desire to express something, and that something is not Art, but Life, with a very big L, that is to say the author's own feelings about life and all it means to him. As a form of expression it exists in order to communicate. Many artists would deny this, as Bunyan tried to deny the *raison d'être* of his "Pilgrims' Progress."

> . . . . but yet I did not think
> To show to all the world my pen and ink
> In such a mode; I only thought to make
> I know not what: nor did I undertake
> Thereby to please my neighbour, no, not I:
> I did it mine own self to satisfy.

And yet the author's first thought: "when I had thus put mine ends together" was

> To show them others that I might see whether
> They would condemn them or them justify.

This is exactly the artist's procedure. After having, as he may quite sincerely believe, created "art for art's sake," merely his own self to gratify, he yet immediately overtly or covertly desires to exhibit his work. The desire to communicate, to come in contact, to *touch* beings of his kind prompts the act of creation, and the act follows not as a matter of creative intellect, or creative will, but of creative emotion, which bends the will to its own purposes. The purpose of art is then essentially social, and the standard by which it is to be judged is the measure of its influence—or the power of its appeal.

The purposes of art—being outside art, there is no reason why it should not be used in a thousandfold manner excluding neither the telling of stories, nor the teaching of conduct, nor the imitation of nature, nor the recording of facts, nor political propaganda, nor the cracking of a joke, nor the expression of poetic feeling; the purposes are limitless. But the criteria by which it ought to be judged are not, or perhaps one should say, are no longer canons of an abstruse æsthetic law, incomprehensible to those who have not mastered the complexities of "æsthetic research," but the nature of the message, and the adequacy and fulness with which the message is delivered to the eye, and through the eye to the mind. The criteria are given by the message and its delivery, and the difference between a great artist and a minor artist, or a *good* artist and a *bad* one are purely relative. One must not however understand in the word "message" something like literary meaning: Chardin's pictures of pots and pans and tobacco-pipes had an artistic "message": They were an expression of his fervent love for the little human and personal aspects of life—and not as in Cézanne the desire to express the impersonal "solidity of form."

The message and its delivery, these are the important things in art, these are the things that make, *e.g.*, Rembrandt greater than Raphael, whose æsthetic 'emotion' was an intellectual affair ; really, an outcome that is of the study of Græco-Roman sculpture applied to painting. Raphael is greatest precisely in his lesser works, such as the "Tempi Madonna," or the "Gravida" for instance, where his humanity has conquered his intellect. On the other hand, Rembrandt failed in his time, *and quite rightly*, where he let his purely æsthetic emotions master his common-sense. To paint a portrait-group as a group of portraits is the rational thing, and his problem was not how to make a *beautiful* picture but how to paint representations of personalities. Instead of which Rembrandt allowed himself to be carried away by things which interested him as an artist, disgusted his patrons and produced a work of "art" which was falsely regarded but rightly condemned as a "Night-watch."

The defenders of the esoteric in art, the people who believe that art is for the few and not for the many, would say simply that Rembrandt failed in life because his public did not understand him. In the hands of a shrewd modern publisher for his etchings, Rembrandt would have made a fortune, and posterity would have judged him to have been an eminently popular and successful artist. The unpopularity of Great Art is largely a myth due to the fact that so-called æsthetic laws are taken arbitrarily as standards of achievement, instead of the purely human: that is to say the human appeal, the message is never an obstacle to great art, but because the artists are so often mislead to rely on æsthetics for their appeal, it often happens that the masses will greedily absorb the message even when it is incompetently delivered, whilst they will reject with derision or indifference the solution of deeply pondered æsthetic problems. They are starved, poor folk, and instead of sympathy and service from the artist, they receive but sneers because they swallow poorly prepared *nutrimentum spiritus* or miserable substitutes for such. The Man in the Street prefers a "Kirchner-Girl" to the Rokeby Venus: of course he does and quite naturally too. His preference shows his innate good sense, and the æsthetician who would foist a Velasquez upon him, only proves the lack of it. The Kirchner-Girl *means* something to the modern youth; it represents to him a picture of *his* ideal of womanhood, his would be *hetaira*. If there is something wrong in this, there is something wrong in our social conditions, for which he is only very indirectly to blame. Velasquez' Venus, in so far as it is by that painter's brush, is an excellent exercise in paint, which the Man in the Street of to-day is not called upon to understand. It appeals to the expert and has no business to appeal to anyone who is not concerned with technicalities. Not one of the defenders of the faith of æsthetic, but looks down upon "minds who are not trained in the complexities of æsthetic research," oblivious of the fact that art is created without the aid of such research, great artists being as a rule sons of practical toil rather than theoretical pleasure—a humiliating reflection, bye the bye, on education. The *educated* person is, it seems, doomed to inferiority in the arts, and if not, at all events only an exception that proves the rule. But on the other hand, it must be admitted that since the Renaissance few artists, no matter how lowly their origin, have addressed themselves to their own class ; they have been willing ministrants to princes spiritual and temporal, to big-wigs and money-bags, pardonably perhaps, since they have hitherto depended on such for the butter on their bread. Also, artists being as mortal and vulnerable and vain as other men, they have connived at the hocus-pocus trick played by the high-priests of transubstantion upon their art. They have pretended to believe in divine

æsthetics which the high-priests professed to have discovered in their work, and of which they themselves knew nothing. It gave them a semi-divine position. Mystification spoilt art as it has spoilt religion. Briefly the "*hoc-est-corpus*" trick consists in pretending that a work of art is more than the thing it is, so to speak. By means of transubstantiation it is supposed to be capable of evoking scientific ecstasy connected with and belonging entirely to art, just as religion is supposed to be due entirely to the God within us, and not to the devils without, viz., the conditions of life which create the religious appeal. Now in art: if a picture represents a mother and a child it is made to appear in religion as the Madonna and Infant Christ: but since the hocus-pocus trick has been played, it represents in art an organisation of *colour* and *form*.

That is a transubstantiation. The Madonna and Child was at all events a mother and child in its highest significance; it was an intensification of the message, the divine mother holding the divinest child. The message was the *main* thing: the criterion was the extent to which the intensification had been made manifest.

Under modern conditions of transubstantiation, however, the Mother and Child has the lowest significance: has lost indeed, by abstraction, its *raison d'être* in life and has become a mere æsthetic organization, or what Whistler previously called "an arrangement."

So it happens that the ordinary spectator is practically unable to understand a really *modern* work of art because it is no longer what it seems to be, and instead of seeing, often with some difficulty, the representation of a woman and a baby, he is expected to see the ingenuity with which an artist has set and solved an "æsthetic" problem, and to derive from this act of contemplation "intellectual rapture," which is supposed to increase with the decrease of "imitation" or the increase of abstraction.

If he turns to the critic for an explanation he may be told this: "The new men relate the central object to all surrounding objects which become an essential part of its character, whereas the old men gave every single object in a composition an importance and structural unity of its own. A house is one thing, a tree another, a sky another, and each is treated so that we may view it in separation. The difference between the old and the new, vision and interpretation, is that of seeing and doing in detail and mass. The old men were concerned with detail-impressionism and detail-expressionism. The new men with mass-impressionism and mass-expressionism."*

Not very helpful, nor very precise. Raphael for example was continually experimenting with "mass-impressionism" in the arrangement of his compositions. In any case, however, the mass-im- and expression must be a summary affair, to which the artist can only do summary justice—which means as much injustice as detail im- and expressionism. The former offers the eye too little, the latter too much—and both consequently detract from *significance* instead of adding to it. The intention of a work of art is not in *art*, but in life, and the view point which decides the necessary amount of addition or abstraction, is given by the *soul* of the artist, by his nature as a human being. Instead of which the modernest artists seek for this view-point in impersonal, eternal finality.

We are at that moment in the evolution of art, at which the artist, for the first time, realises his boundless freedom, finds himself no longer a servant but a master; not a creature but a creator. We must therefore seek the explanation in the method of *creation*.

As the artist is not actually a creator *ex nihilo* he can only construct from given material by *abstraction*. Now abstraction when practiced for the purposes of analysis

* Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in Drama and Art.

and investigation, is extremely valuable, and as a preliminary to creative processes it is even instinctive: every child likes to take a toy to pieces to see what it is made of and how it works, and when it has progressed further on the way to creation to put the parts together again.

Hitherto the evolution of art has been an attempt of the human mind to take the things before its eyes to pieces, and we must regard the *divisionists*, the Signacs and Seurats as the end of the childlike period: they took even light, the womb of art—to pieces.

As a creative method, however, abstraction is not to be commended, particularly when the new synthesis is not intended as a repetition of the original object. It is as if a man disintegrated the works of a time-piece with a view to reassembling parts of the disintegration as a motor engine. Moreover, abstraction as a creative method is extremely primitive, and as such found in stages far below human creation: Birds and beasts abstract things for purposes of æsthetic enjoyment of a kind. Elemental things such as colour, form, movement, can produce only simple emotions, and an organisation of such simplicities, without associative subject matter, must be a very crude effort. What produces great art is not at all simplicity, but complexity carried beyond human understanding, and hence reducible in terms of art only by feeling, or by *unconscious* self-expression. In other words a work of art must be the fruit of life: it grows in the unconscious, flowers in the subconscious, and bears fruit in consciousness. Ultimately every human thought is reducible to his sense of touch, his feeling—and æsthetic enjoyment is therefore a delight in *touch*. A work of art is a thing made by human activities which evokes in us an instinctive desire for actual personal contact (visitors in museums have to be warned "not to touch") or vicarious contact by means of our sense of sight. That being so, we will be moved most by that which touches us most deeply, which corresponds to our desire. The modern artist in dealing with universals cannot appeal to us, cannot touch us as deeply as the old artist who appealed to us by dealing in particulars, *i.e.*, the particulars of his age, realised through the particulars of his nature. Universalities and generalities are necessarily less articulated, less *particularised* than individual conceptions: for that reason, to mention an example at haphazard: an Egyptian portrait statue appeals and awes us more than the pyramid. That being so, the artist who thinks of humanity, who is a social being, directing his energies upon humane problems will touch us more deeply, and more completely than the individualist-artist who moves in a shadow-world of generalities, which generalities are after all no more than the inner fringes of his own self.

What is wrong with Picasso, say in his "Femme à la Mandoline," is his unlimited, absolute and anti-social attitude towards life, which he studies as a problem of æsthetics, and cannot solve because he leaves out the integral calculus of life to which it has a general but no particular reference. That, however, must not mislead us to do him an injustice: there are dozens of femmes à la, or sans mandoline, which have not even the quality of honest endeavour, still less the mental effort to solve problems of philosophic æsthetics, but are simply the more or less skilful exercises in paint produced by minds whose sensuality does not exceed their commercial calculus. So, from one point of view even futile attempts to solve impossible problems of æsthetics, are preferable to "works of art," which have for their inspiration mainly the wish to create marketable wares. On the other hand the art of a shallow Marcus Stone, who pleases the taste of a great number of people, is more sociable than the efforts at "intellectual rapture." The degree of

harmfulness of either conception of art is nevertheless not easy to determine. Whether it be better not to be understood, and therefore to mislead, or to be understood and to misguide is a nice question.

However that may be, every artist must create and communicate. He is at the present moment so delighted with the newly discovered perfect freedom in creation, that he forgets the necessity of communication, and because we are still in an anti-social stage of society which is at present in its greatest state of agitation, we are confronted with the most violent forms of anti-social art, which make hash of reason, and mincemeat of emotion.

But the dawn of a new era is approaching, an era which will be totally unlike any epoch that has gone before. We are halting on the threshold of a new organisation of humanity at large, and this will in due course bring forth a new conception of art. Every great movement in humanity has been accompanied by a great movement in artistic expression. One may confidently predict that the artist of to-morrow will find a much broader basis for his social work, corresponding to the broadening of the basis of social organisation. Patronage will change in its form, will in fact cease : the artist will not need patrons and protectors.

"The artist of the future," says Tolstoi, "will live the common life of man earning his subsistence by some kind of labour. The fruits of that highest spiritual strength which passes through him he will try to share with the greatest number of people, for in such transmission to others of the feelings that have arisen in him, he will find happiness and his reward." Tolstoi will supersede the egregious Clausewitz.

III.

AN age which has no fixed standard of life cannot be expected to have a fixed standard of art. Modern painting, in which term are included all the *isms* practiced to-day, is indeed so various and manifold that without a stout heart, a broad mind, and a good will, it is impossible to appreciate its mutually destructive manifestations. For this modern painting, regarded as a whole, presents, even in its national delimitations, a patchwork of conflicting ideas and ideals, recognised as a unity only by the fact that it is in frames. Even that, however, is not strictly true, since many of the best works of modern art are not intended for framing, such as posters ; nor even for room decoration, such as cartoons and illustrations, and some of its very finest examples are the "living" pictures of the stage.

The present collection of reproductions, however, will show at a glance that there is a steep division in modern art, an almost unbridgable gulf, which separates the pictures by A. J. Bennett, Roger Fry, E. McKnight Kauffer, Malcolm M. Milne, John Nash, L. J. Peploe, Anne Estelle Rice, from the rest. The difference is so clear that they could be picked out by almost any person, without any knowledge of art. This difference is caused by the attitude of mind in which these artists approach their task, compared with the rest. However much all the rest may differ between themselves, they are yet agreed in one point : they do no violence to our eyes, they represent objects, more or less, as we—the non-artists—see them, or at least, believe that we could see them. The minority artists have no such concern. They present objects neither as we nor as they themselves see them : they do not in fact paint things as they appear to the *eye*, but to the *mind* ; they not only eschew "imitation" but handle representation with the greatest freedom, beyond that they of course differ amongst themselves. Peploe and Estelle Rice manifestly belong together and would have been joined by Fergusson, but for the fact that the latter painter is represented by a picture of his earlier period. Colour is here sounded as with the blare of trumpets,

in large volumes. These artists have an exquisite eye for colour and form, and for arrangement, so that their pictures may be designated as poems in colour. The things they represent seem to have taken upon themselves a different nature; so much is that the case that one does not mind what the objects they happen to represent are, but is perfectly content to regard them as arrangements of colour and form. I have ventured to call them poems, mindful of my own distinctions; they are not prose because they do not content themselves with a mere analytical or synthetical representation; nor are they decorations because they are self-assertive—they are complete in themselves, and once one has dissociated his mind from "representation," give a pure delight—so far as they go.

Roger Fry's "Poinsettia" presents a little different attitude. His picture it is true, is also as regards colour, "an arrangement" intended to please the eye, but he has not got away from representation to the same extent. In Peploe's picture the fan has so much cubic weight that it has lost the *nature* of a fan. Roger Fry's "Poinsettia" is so poinsettish that it has affected the whole of the picture, which should be properly labelled "Points-set-here"; since it is not so much the representation of a plant but the solution of an æsthetic problem. The artist has not been affected by the *life* of the plant, but by its colours and planes, with which he has built up a unity consisting of harmonies of angles and contrasts of colours. The sheets of paper on the wall corresponding to the papery leaves and petals shows what the artist was thinking about. The objects in the picture are totally divorced from one another and from us, except through the link of æsthetics.

A still further step away from direct representation is taken by Malcolm Milne, curiously enough, however, connected with older forms of art by a definitely literary—in this case biblical—subject-matter. It represents the "Flight into Egypt." The artist has here chosen a certain subject as a means of arranging certain volumes of coloured forms. Its simplicity is not like Giotto's—natural, but highly artificial; the outcome of that intellectual attitude towards art which is prevalent at the moment. One may I think take it for granted that the artist selected the subject because he wanted to paint, but did not elect to paint because he wanted to express the subject. This attitude makes a vital difference, and yet perhaps an exceedingly subtle one. In his desire to give his "Flight into Egypt" on the predella of the "Adoration of the Magi" the greatest possible actuality, Gentile da Fabriano set for the first time the sun in the firmament of art by affixing a little lump of gold to the sky of his panel, *faute de mieux*, that is to say had he been able to do so he would have stuck the sun himself there. If you were in the position to offer the modern artist a chance of a glimpse at the actual flight of the three holy persons, he would probably not take it. The realities he is interested in do neither depend on actuality nor on verisimilitude. To modern artists subject is only an excuse, and significantly enough this "Flight into Egypt" is the *only* literary subject in this book. Mr. McKnight Kauffer's attitude differs again as much from Mr. Milne's as Milne's does from Fry's. Kauffer's problem in the picture here produced is not merely an æsthetic one. I take it that he is every inch as anxious to paint material facts as Vermeer or Monet were, only the younger artist differs as to the degree of essentials he will admit. The younger artist records only what matters to him. So that by looking at his picture you can read his mind, and if you do not agree with him you will know exactly why you disagree. If he has said too much you will find its superfluities, if he has said too little you will know how to fill the gaps. To the anxious realist every detail mattered, every whisp of straw, so to speak, and by a

careful inventory he made the task easy for the spectator. The impressionist who was anxious about the atmosphere, made the task difficult for the spectator who was more interested in things than in appearances. The post-impressionist makes it still more difficult, because he only states what *he feels* about things, and one must take it or leave it. Indeed, Kauffer's picture shows on examination, order, colour-truth and cubic weight, surprising when one considers the paucity of means.

If we compare Mr. John Nash's landscape with Kauffer's work we will find certain disagreements in mental attitude, but their work will stand side by side, with all other landscapes, except perhaps Mr. Gardner's, in opposition. John Nash is also a representative of intellectual art: he does not paint an imitation of nature, he paints, or as one should say, deposits only so much of the objects under his vision as will serve his purpose, and he will do that simply and summarily rather than realistically: compare the treatment of the stooks, tree trunks, and fence in middleground, with the treatment of the background, particularly the sky on the right—a vivid example of a compromise between optical and intellectual statement of visual fact.

Finally Mr. Gardner completes the little circle of art which represents what one may without offence call the offensive of the modern movement, offensive because it presents a direct attack upon our eyes, a clear challenge to our habit of viewing things, though Gardner's art is perhaps not quite so uncompromising as the rest.

The next troop we encounter is formed by G. C. Brockhurst, Henry Lamb, Dod Proctor and G. W. Lambert, headed by Augustus John; incidentally and accidentally they are all here represented by portraits.

The surface of their conception is far less *offensive* in the sense in which I have just used the term, than that of their colleagues. Their main characteristic is the outstanding merit of their draughtsmanship: they are *skilled* in an uncommon degree, and in the sense in which the great Old Masters were skilled. One can arrange these portraits in accordance with the influences to which they manifestly owe their origin; thus John shows here more the English tradition and less the Italian, which so often distinguishes his work, and which is reflected in the work of Brockhurst, whom he influences quite clearly. The Florentine, *i.e.*, Leonardesque manner also clearly speaks out of Lamb's "Girl of the Field's" and lies strangely conjoined with Sargent's technique, hidden in Lambert's "Miss Helen Lawson." Dod Proctor's "Young Girl" bespeaks Ingres' conscientiousness. All these portraits are thoroughly characteristic of certain reactionary tendencies, much to be commended because draughtsmanship is gravely jeopardised by the "woolly" impressionist on the one hand, and by the philosophical painters, who use their brains in lieu of their eyeballs on the other. Colour, one feels, is in the work of these five painters distinctly subordinated to form, but nevertheless introduced for the very definite purpose of emotional pleasure and not as a statement of realism, or actual fact. In Brockhurst's "By the Hills" the little girl's frock and her hair are as much accompaniment of the sky and background as of her face and hand. In John's "Lady Cynthia Asquith," the background is conditioned by her hair and her complexion, whilst the frock serves as a foil for the intrigue of the fingers. Lamb and Lambert rely for effect mainly on facial expression, whilst Dod Proctor manifestly attempted to interest as much by the colour pattern as by the actual draughtsmanship.

The next group is represented by one work only: it is John Noble's "On the Plage." If it shows any influence I am not acquainted with such. To me it seems to stand by itself as a very simple, very strong

and very agreeable piece of decoration, excellently harmonious, well balanced, and full of "carrying power." Arrangement of colour is its principle, which also applies to the following three pictures: Frank Brangwyn's "Decoration," Paul Henry's "Achill Women," and Hippolyte Daeye's "The First Doll." Paul Henry's picture is strongly accented all over, the focus being formed by the fiercely rebellious red petticoat. In Daeye's picture we have the subtle harmony of greys and yellows and pale purples, with vivid contrasts of black and green, admirably illustrative of the subject with its natural tendernesses and sudden exuberances. The colours in these two pictures are in manifest relation to their subjects. In Brangwyn the composition follows the tradition of Venetian decoration, with all his own virility and delight in fulness, but the colour-scheme must be regarded as part of a decorative ensemble beyond the confines of the picture itself. The difference in Brangwyn's conception of painting and that of Charles Shannon's is here well illustrated. Neither of these two artists are in opposition to tradition, as the artists of the first group are, but Shannon's portrait of "Lillah McCarthy" clearly shows how he conceives his pictures as poems; that is to say as unities complete in themselves. Shannon, in fact, is the one living British artist who carries on the Venetian tradition in a completely scholarly sense, and with absolute success. His pictures are not modern, nor do they aspire to be so. Brangwyn, on the other hand, is the only living British artist who conceiving canvas as part of a decorative whole, is not overawed by the space, which he covers with Rubens' ease and *verve*.

Take Sato's "After the Snow" may next be mentioned as an arrangement of colour, with the emphasis shifted upon design or flat pattern, but this picture cannot manifestly legitimately be compared with work of our own western origin.

H. Davis Richter's "Azaleas" is a picture with a very definite analogy to Shannon's portrait: represents both certain natural objects (with due apologies to Shannon's sitter) so arranged as to make a pleasing ensemble of colour, design and form. Richter's flower pieces, though at first sight merely imitations of flowers, will invariably be found associated with other elements, vases, figures, table-reflections, or curtain back-grounds, so that they are conceived as parts of a picture-poem, and are not like Fantin-Latour's, or James' flower-pieces, the poem itself. Another example of arrangement of nature fitted into art is Tonks' "Torn Gown." The title is a mere excuse to paint a charmingly red-haired girl as a definite main theme of colour in surroundings specially harmonised with her. The "Torn Gown" and Henry's "Achill Women" are nearly related in pictorial principle, but the emphasis on subtle gradation of tone in the former, and on strong colour contrast in the latter, clearly shows the trend of art during the last twenty years.

Fergusson's "White Hat" would seem to belong to the same category of pictures, were it not for the fact that his later work proves him even in these earlier days to have regarded line, form, colour and arrangement as of deeper psychological significance. Already in this picture one feels the repetition of the colour scheme, pearly grey, pink, green and black in skin, hat and costume, the repetition of the curves in eyebrows, chin-line, dress folds and hat, as the foundation of Fergusson's present phase.

With two exceptions, all the remaining pictures are more or less close and faithful representations of nature, their place in art depending more on treatment and technical qualities, than on free composition. As a consequence, comment on these pictures seems superfluous, they explain themselves.

We may group together the three obviously poetically conceived landscapes by

Barry, Grone and Kell, and on the other hand, five obviously realistic landscapes, by Emile Claus, Beatrice Bland, E. M. Garner, Ruth Hollingsworth and Lucien Pissarro; yet the *realistic* ones will, on inspection, disclose the fact that all the artists had a poetic intention. Beatrice Bland's "Abbotsbury" displaying a rather novel and very delightful toy-like quality in her landscape, and Ruth Hollingsworth, a subtle note of melancholy. The critic, or writer on art, is severely handicapped in one important respect: he dare not allow himself to be carried away by purely personal preferences, and so perhaps impute to certain pictures certain qualities, merely because he prefers the subject. He may, for example, prefer the setting of David Muirhead's "Watermill" to Lamorna Birch's "Cornish Scenery," and give the palm to his preference; yet it would be difficult to say which of the two pictures is the better in technique, widely as they differ in that respect.

C. J. Holmes' landscapes are all distinguished by an elegiac feeling, produced by means of great simplification of form, rhythmic grandeur of line and atmospheric truth. Holmes' landscapes show greater unity of design than any I know, they are also more purely æsthetic, or should one say *classic*, in conception than other English work.

Every painter has naturally his individual conception of art which must express itself necessarily in the handling of the theme, so that the spectator may find a very similar subject treated from totally different mental view points. In Walter Sickert's "La Rue Cousin, Dieppe," and in W. Rothenstein's "The Old Barn at Iles Farm," each depicting buildings, the view point is different. Sickert is best known for his interiors and figures of certain not very attractive quarters of London. His colour schemes are deliberately grey, that is to say arranged in a minor key. Here in the "Rue Cousin" we have by contrast the warmth of the sun bringing out all the attractiveness of an old French town; here we can admire his excellent artistry of composition, colour, and the actual handling of pigment, without regret. There is a suavity in this picture which makes one realise that Sickert's other paintings are inverted suavities. Rothenstein on the other hand is severe. There is no suavity, nor inverted, nor perverted in his art. He aims at the truth — naked. Utmost severity in form and composition, utmost regard for tone relations and a consequent dignity, austere and almost forbidding at times, is paradoxically the attraction of his art. This picture here is The Barn, the whole barn and nothing but the barn—prose intensely realised become poetry, a metamorphosis that is constantly happening through competent craftsmanship in art.

H. Fidler's "Peace" is another example of this metamorphosis. With his great technical knowledge the artist has however overlooked the "architectonics" of a picture; it is a transcript of nature vividly realised but not "arranged." Ethel Walker just stops short of full realisation in "The Card Table"; which is an immensely good sketch, a little too impatient in execution; but the subject was an exceedingly difficult one. Some artists score by increasing the *natural* difficulties of their subject: so for example, MacEvoy in his Helen Morris in "London Pride," where the problem of uniting assumed character and movement with portrait-likeness is coupled with the difficulty of representing a double light.

W. de Glehn and A. J. Munnings represent here the school of "slick" painting from nature, with which the British public became familiar through Sargent. Both the "*Chiffre d'amour*" and the "Horse and Jockey" are most excellent examples of these two artists' work. The competence and proficiency of this school, the very ease with which it succeeded in optical truth, an evolutionary technical development from

Frans Hals combined with Velasquez, more perhaps than anything else caused the reaction illustrated in the work of the first group of artists here under discussion. The school was international and of course had its various individual developments, but it is not difficult to realise its influence in the work of Frederic Whiting, which is distinctly Sargentesque, despite of differences; as well as in Bertieri and Quinn.

The examples by which R. Bevan and Wilson Steer are here represented, also show their relationship to two definite schools. "The Hansom Cab" is a disciplined descendent of Monet's issue, so to speak, and Steer's landscape, of Diaz and the Barbizon school.

Gerald Moira's "The Third Green, Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club," presents a very interesting problem. Professor Moira is pre-eminently known as a decorator. This picture demonstrates this very clearly, but it also shows a dilemma. There were certain decorative appeals in the subject as it lay before the painter's eyes: the lovely quality of the "green," the subtle harmonies of chalk, sand, sea, and sky, the little violent staccato red notes. From a colour point of view there was everything that could be desired in nature at that very spot. Even the natural lines of dunes were appropriate, yet *qua* subject painter the artist felt the necessity of a pictorial unity greater than nature presented, hence the introduction of the figures. We see therefore here clearly the threefold dilemma between Nature, Subject-matter, and Decorative composition.

Allan Davidson's nude study concludes the group of artists who have used direct representation, or imitation of nature as a means of pictorial expression.

There remain two more pictures:—Reginald Frampton's "Flora of the Fells" is here the only specimen of pre-Raphaelite art, or rather that frame of conception which has come to be known by that name. Its interest is of a literary nature, that is to say we "read" its meaning into it.

The last subject under review "The Toilet" by S. de la Bere, is by no means the least, as shall be demonstrated in the next chapter.

IV.

HAD we been asked to classify the pictures represented in this collection after the old manner we should have recorded five still-lifes, eighteen landscapes, two animal pictures, eight portraits, and so forth. A hundred years ago, even fifty years ago, this would have conveyed something to the mind, to-day it means less than nothing. The difference, for example, between Kauffer's and David Muirhead's landscape is so enormous that they do not seem to belong to the same art. Malcolm Milne's "Flight into Egypt" recorded as a historical picture would have outraged all the parsons of Christendom; Fidler's symbol of "Peace" would have puzzled them, and de la Bere's "Toilet" would have shocked the prudery of the Victorian age.

It will surprise the reader who has not had opportunity or inclination to look into such matters, to hear that a hundred years ago, subject-matter decided the rank and merit of an artist; it will surprise the English reader still more that nearly twenty years after Hogarth had painted his "*Mariage à la mode*," Dobson was still considered the chief painter of the *English* school, which was then reckoned together with the German as belonging to the "Ecole Flamande" for this reason: "Tous ces paintres semblent n'avoir eu qu'un Maître: ils ont en général la même maniére, qu'on appelle ordinairement *le goût Flamand*."

Times change: here we have before us a selection of fifty pictures, and instead of *one* master the painters here represented albeit (practically without exception) English, are so various that they have to acknowledge the masters of all ages as their own.

In the days of "le bon goût" connoisseurship was an easy matter; good taste was then distinct from bad taste, and a master of "history" painting was *eo ipso* the superior of portrait and landscape painters, not to mention any of the others such as still-life, flower or animal painters; all of these could only be *talented*, whilst *genius* was the exclusive epithet for the historical painter.

Things have changed, whether for the better, is another question. If the ancient hierarchical order seems to us of to-day ridiculous, the "ismism" of the present will appear to posterity hardly less so. The connoisseur of to-day is not prepared to consider any painter unless he represents a definite ism: academicism, classicism, romanticism, realism, naturalism, impressionism, pointillism, postimpressionism, neo-postimpressionism, futurism, expressionism, vorticism, and so ad libitum.

To us of to-day it may seem ridiculous to rank a Vermeer below a Lebrun, or a Hogarth below a Thornhill, but is it really less ridiculous to rank a vorticist above a futurist, or an academician below a realist. If one painter chose Olympians as his subject, and another boors, it was at least arguable that the former had a more refined taste, and one can quite understand why a painter of ham bones and tobacco pipes like Chardin should not rank as highly as a painter of Madonnas. If we have since learnt to prefer a well-painted vase to an ill-painted Venus, we must nevertheless beware of the other extreme. Venus *is* a nobler conception than a jug or a dish of oranges; a portrait of a woman *is* a finer thing than a portrait of a cow. We have now arrived at a stage where subject *does* matter. There was a time when a landscape by Constable was preferable to a "history" by West, because the *technique* of one was better than that of the other, just as possibly a landscape by Wilson Steer is superior to a landscape by Leader. But even here one must beware of rash judgment: Leader's landscapes are very honest, and in some cases exceedingly competent. Ingres only a few years ago was taboo—to-day he is coming back into his own.

Present day criteria are extremely unreliable, more unreliable even than the criteria of "le bon goût." Too many of our artists think too much, and such men are, as not only Shakespeare, but also Ruskin have pointed out, dangerous. The philosopher-artist of to-day, for example, will paint you a simple little landscape in an apparently very simple little manner. There is no attempt at scrupulous analytic presentation, or impressionistic light vibration; the salient features are rendered generally with heavy unmistakable outlines not over carefully drawn. The philosopher artist will explain that he has "stated" all he felt about the subject—that it contains everything pictorially *worth* mentioning; that, anyway that is how he saw the thing. But he deceives himself, he never saw the things at all. He saw shapes and planes and colours and lines and lights and shades and angles and curves; in short, he saw what an art student is taught to realise, so that he may be able to paint the *thing*, and he mistook this *pons asinorum* to the high road of vision for the high road itself. It reminds one of those examination papers in which a paragraph of a thousand words has to be condensed into a précis of two hundred and fifty. The paragraph in its context had a *real* meaning, a real content, but for purposes of examination this meaning has significance only in so far as it affects the candidate's problem of précis writing. But précis writing is not literature, and précis painting not art. Yet it is precisely this précis painting, which would do away with the significance *belonging to the context of life* that is regarded by the philosopher artist as art. He goes even still further, and by an analogy with music would claim for the graphic arts an appeal which as we shall presently see, it cannot possess, viz.: that

of a direct action without the intermediary stage of association or representation. In order to do this our notions of ideas and words have to be confused, and we, the common public have to be put into our places—"The public are not admitted." Under the weight of his own authority W. H. Wright, for example, says: "Persons who would not pretend to grasp without study the principles of modern science, still demand that art be sufficiently lucid to be comprehended at once by the untutored mind." (Hark to the examiner!) "A physician may tell them of profundities in medical experimentation, and they will accept his views as those of an expert in a science of which they are ignorant. But when an artist tells them of recondite principles in æsthetics, they accuse him of an endeavour to befuddle him . . . . and yet without a scientific basis art is merely an artifice—the New Thought in æsthetics. Readily comprehensible painting is no further advanced than readily comprehensible therapeutics." What does this mean? The public are apparently reproved because they demand "that art be sufficiently lucid to be comprehended at once," which demand is pilloried as an impertinence on what grounds? Apparently because we do not desire a physician to make us grasp the materia medica before we allow him in to cure us of a stomach-ache. There is surely a difference between the arts of evoking "order" and quelling disorders. The healers' profession is in no way concerned with communication, all he is asked to do is to heal us; how he does it is his business. He does not create. The artist creates in order to communicate. It is his professed business to *appeal* to us: the appeal is the sole reason for the support or the employment he gets from us. We therefore have a right to expect that his appeal should be *lucid*. If it fails in that respect it fails entirely, however beautiful and complex the result of his æsthetic research. Just so a therapeutist may go into raptures over a "beautiful" operation of appendicitis—but if his patient dies under it, his "rapture" will have been in vain. We, as the public, stand in relation to the artist perhaps as we do to the physician; only that we want health from the latter and *lucidity* from the former. If they give us what we want we will call them; if not, we naturally fall back on "any old thing," old women's spells or New Thought, and—hang the *scientific basis!* A beautiful picture that cannot be appreciated except by artists, is like a beautiful operation that may give intellectual rapture to students without curing the patient.

The Cubists and their commentators have been so deeply interested in the "gradus ad Parnassum" that they have completely lost sight of Parnassus itself: they don't get there. The fundamental mistake of this intellectual form of art lies in the disregard of the message, the "humanitas" which Wright scorns. Art is not a science — why science itself is scarcely a science yet. Art is much nearer to religion, to a faith in existence, to a belief in humanity. It is emotional. It is the satisfaction of a longing, an inspiration, at once a thanksgiving for contact and a desire for communication.

No doubt art has a scientific *basis:* that is to say there is an absolute objective reason for it; but this reason has nothing whatever to do with the artist, anymore than the science of acoustics has to do with the musician. Art and music existed long before science, and all the science in the world will not produce art. One cannot create great things by study; one cannot even achieve greatness in the exactest of all sciences, mathematics, by study. The great thing, the vital thing is the power of association which enables man to associate the purposeful in relation to the particular purpose he has in view at any given moment from the vast store of the universe.

So the composer selects not mathematically but aurally, and the painter optically from the treasure of sound and colour; so they know what is wrong, not by *counting* the vibrations of sound or light, but by *feeling* them. So also the question of right and wrong, good or bad, purposeful or not purposeful, in art is decided by measuring the work of art by *outside standards*: that is to say by the object aimed at. A picture which has its standards *within* is self-destroying. "Cézanne's pictures are as inpenetrable as sculpture. Every object seems hewn out of marble," says our authority. In other words, Cézanne aimed at solidity. He strove to make everything appear solid: the purpose was within his art, for every object in nature does not "seem hewn out of marble." Flowers and napkins for example, not to mention human bodies. Cézanne, by painting napkins as if they were solid, had lost his reference to life. When the Vorticist proclaims: "Every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It belongs to the art of this form: If sound, to music; if formed of words, to literature: colour in position, to painting . . ." He cannot be referring to life. Most emotions which present themselves to the vivid consciousness are at once sound, sight, taste, smell, and touch, or combinations of two or more of such; and as to the question of colour that is more than debatable. Every emotion is ultimately reducible to a desire for *touch* in the widest sense of the word—the desire for contact by means of ear, or eye, of gustatory or olfactory organs, as well as actual tactility: and the function of the arts is to evoke such desires, or possibly their contraries, by means of sound or form. Form, however, is made visible not by colour, but by *light*. The arts of sound are music and literature; the arts of light are the graphic arts and sculpture. Of these arts, so far at all events, music alone can evoke emotion *directly*, because it touches us physically, *i.e.*, immediately. It stirs us in the original sense of the word, as anyone who stands near a bassoon, trombone, or piccolo player, may experience. Certain forms of speech, certain kinds of poetry when actually recited may also, but in a lesser degree, evoke such direct appeal. In all other forms of art the desire acts only vicariously. It may be possible to invent an entirely new art, the art of colour—but that would have nothing to do with painting; it would be an art that would immerse us in coloured *lights*, just as music immerses us in chromatic sounds; it would be an art of time, like music, poetry, or the dance; it would depend on a dramatic succession of pure colours, singly or in groups: *i.e.*, broken *light*. Those of us who are specially susceptible to *colour* might then possibly be able to *hear* them, as there are people who can *see* sound. Meantime, however, such an art does not exist.

In painting, as in any of the arts of space, we are subject to reflections of light, not to light itself, so that the re-action of pigments on our organs of sight depends more upon the *light* that falls upon the coloured object than upon the actual pigments used in its coating. The colours we see in painting therefore stir us only mediately, *i.e.*, in so far as they stir up *associations* of ideas. One can think of a blue, a red, a green, etc., as an abstract idea of *light*, but one cannot think of a blue colour except as a pigment belonging to something, and the shape of its limits causes our mind to "get busy" with its tentacles of association in search of an image with which the colour might be associated. We then say "it suggests" such and such a thing. It is the artist's function to evoke such suggestions by formed colour, as it is the writers to evoke them by *formed sound*, viz.: words. His work will be all the more perfect if suggestion and subject-meaning, *i.e.*, outer appearance and inner significance are one, just as the poet's work is all the better if the sound of his words

correspond to the meaning of his poem. "The sound must seem an echo to the sense." But the painter must resolutely cast aside the temptation of confusing the colours of his art with the sounds of music: one cannot lift the stars with a pail from a well. This natural and unsurmountable difference imposes upon the artist a further obligation: he must not only relate his forms, his colours, his composition, the whole pictorial organism in fact, to the association of ideas he wishes to evoke, he must also—if he wishes to be understood—bow to certain conventions, an obligation from which the composer of sounds is exempt, since in music sound reacts directly upon the mind. This obligation is in itself, however, no greater hardship than that of expressing himself intelligibly imposed upon the poet. In other words, whilst the creative desire must come from the emotions of LIFE, it must be translated by the intellect into terms of ART. Some of our latest schools of art seem to invert the process: they would construct a work of art by means of the intellect in order to produce an emotion. Says Wright: "The generating forces of modern painting, however, rest on no metaphysical hypothesis." Exactly; that is its trouble. "The generating forces" of every human product rest necessarily on a metaphysical hypothesis, and will continue to do so until we have solved the riddle of LIFE.

The plain truth is that life is a mystery, that art as an expression of life includes the mystery, and that the most we can achieve is to translate our emotional experience of life intelligently into another and added experience partaking of both emotional and intellectual qualities.

Here in this present collection is only one painter whose picture shows a correlation of subject matter and handling; it is de la Bère's "Toilet." The subject, not perhaps over well drawn, is a light and airy bubble. What use were here Cézanne's solidity. The flesh is not marble nor meant to be marble, but on the contrary evanescent as youth, transitory as sensual rapture. Colour is here used to intensify the irridescent pearliness of beautiful flesh, and the manner in which it is placed on the paper corresponds to the *bubbliness* of the conception. Thousands of painters have treated it with ponderous gravity, with laborious assiduity. De la Bère's picture is *within its limits* complete, after all the best praise that can be given to any work of art. If the limits be narrow, at all events they are full; that is to say the artist has succeeded in making us see as he saw, *and feel as he felt about it.* The standard is here variable, the language sufficiently conventional to be understood, and sufficiently personal to prove the emotional origin.

What better standards of judging art can there be? All the *permanent* standards artists and æsthetics have so far invented are fallacies. The life-force is one and indivisible, but it expresses itself through the individual, and in so far as it seeks intelligent expression it is the means by which it develops itself. The artists connexion with the absolute—his true *religio* works from the unconscious through the subconscious; to become conscious and therefore strictly relative in the intellect. To work from the intellect into the emotion is putting the cart before the horse; it is incidentally the philosophic method, not the scientific, still less the artistic.

V.

ENOUGH has perhaps been said to show the enormous field of art which remains to all intents and purposes as yet untilled; or the mine of art, the tremendous raw material which is as yet scarcely exploited.

The whole of the art of the past down to our present day is indeed the raw material out of which the experience of the future will fashion new things. The interested

person may by study of such common affairs of poster-hoardings discern in designs the alluvial deposits of many "isms" adapted, adopted, utilised for present day purposes. Here he may see the construction of a head in planes that bespeak Manet, there a relic of romanticism, elsewhere the hint of a Turner, or the vestige of Hiroshige; there again a reminiscence of Raphael, or a memory of ancient Rome; elsewhere symbols that reach back into a prehistoric past. So out of the great welter of invention and technical achievement, the future will select in ever varying combinations, and with continual reference to life individual and social, the purposeful. Purification and simplification will be brought about by the omission of irrelevancies and not, as is sometimes to-day attempted by the impoverishment of relevancies. One thing however we may be sure of: the future will learn the difference between æsthetics and the architectonics of art.

Æsthetics represent the belief in a universal absolute law by which art may be distinguished from non-art at all times and everywhere, even presumably on Mars or Sirius. In æsthetics, forms, lines, colours, volumes, planes and so forth have significance without reference to anything on earth, *i.e.*, to say without subject-association. In architectonics nothing has meaning except in reference to subject matter: indeed subject matter is their sole *raison d'être*. Architectonics teach the artist how to build up his work, so that his foundations may be well and truly laid, and the superstructure may serve its purpose as the *house* of ideas. Well aware that forms, lines, colours and the other surface qualities of his work must be associated with some meaning, and knowing furthermore how easily the mind of the spectator forms associations, the artist will learn through architectonics how to create desirable and how to exclude undesirable associative ideas from his work. He will use his knowledge of architectonics based on the experience of the ages, to express his creative emotion intelligibly.

Meantime the æstheticians will go on erecting fabrics which only the iniate may enter; having passed their grades of initiation, and severed their connection with the life from which they have sprung. It is the misuse of architectonics. So by misuse from the practice of architecture Freemasonry has sprung from masonry, representing to-day hardly more than convivial charity concerned mainly with the support of its members. The Freemasons, too, maintain that forms and colours, rhythms and rites have a significance of their own, no more *naturally* inherent in them than the significance of form, colour and rhythm of ART is naturally inherent in art. The human mind works consciously only by association, by continual reference to the individual and the particular, not to the general and absolute, which is realised by the *unconscious* activity, or conduct of the species as a whole. Freemasonry had meaning so long as it was connected with real masons, *i.e.*, persons whose object in life is the service they render to the community. The connoisseur who knows the *rapture* caused by the contemplation of a beautiful oriental jar, professes to be shocked if we suggest to him that it would be still more beautiful if it were *used* as a jam-jar. Marmalade in "Ming" would seem to him a desecration. On the contrary, the object of life is to produce a community which would refuse to take its marmalade out of anything less beautiful than "Ming." In the same way a picture that inspires rapture by its "art," gains rather than loses by its subject, because it has an enlarged power of "touch." Touch is the foundation of all emotion, and emotion the mother of all thought. Unless a thing touches us it leaves us unconcerned, and the more it touches us the greater the points of contact—some might say spiritual and material — the greater, the sublimer the emotion and the resultant thought.

Subject-matter, *i.e.*, the relation LIFE has with ART, the interest in living with the expression of living is the really significant thing. Already one hears of the vanguard awakening to this fact: one hears of Picasso's conversion to Ingres, of all painters. But one may also see how awkward and diffident some of them have become in the process, how they would push subject-matter beyond the limits of art—in their efforts to have done with "ismism."

Life is a complex and mysterious thing; there is no need to confuse its complexity and mystery by trying to explain the inexplicable and to explain away the explicable. If the artist goes boldly for the thing that has stirred him in LIFE, he will find ways and means of expressing it in ART, without recourse to "isms" and academic theory. Commonsense alone should prevent him from confusing the arts of time with the arts of space, or the arts of pigments with the arts of sounds. A little reflection should deter him from the vain pursuit of "the absolute," knowing, as he ought to know by now, that the most courageous flight can only be undertaken with the purely relative "flying machine" of thought that cannot soar above the atmosphere of association. The artist must face the fact that art is fundamentally a means of communication. If the spoken word or written language, though they are bound to expression by the *convention* of grammar, syntax and the epochal and topical peculiarities of associative ideas are apt to be misunderstood, how much more must not painted thought be open to misconstruction and misunderstanding. Since one cannot argue with a piece of framed canvas, the picture must explain itself, and a form of art that needs explanation in the shape of commentary, manifestos, introductions, printed æsthetics, and what not, is no better than the old literary subject that pre-supposed an intimate acquaintance with literature on the part of the spectator. The indifference, if not the ridicule, with which some serious modern efforts are treated by the public, is often only due to the fact that the artist has pre-supposed a knowledge of certain written theories on the part of the public. He has treated a premise given in art-literature, as if it were a premise in art. But the public have no concern with the technique and theory of painting, they are under no obligation to undertake the "complexities of æsthetic research." It is the artist's business to touch the public, and to touch, too, the greatest number of that public. How he does this is his affair.

There is only one other possibility. If art is a matter for the scientist and theoretician, then the great artist is the most learned, and the greatest artist on that assumption might find himself unable to reach a public at all, because "the higher, the fewer."

It is with art as it is with religion: there are Oxford and Cambridge varieties of both: nevertheless, *the best* spring not from high schooling but from deep feeling.

The public need art. They have always needed it in some form or other when they have a moment to spare. If they cannot get what they want from an artist who knows his business, they will get it from one who does not. With greater leisure will come a greater demand for the arts. The demand from the public will be quantitative: it is the artist's job to make it qualitative. And there is this consolation: epochs of material and social progress are invariably linked with a higher progress in the arts. The factors that will give the *masses* more leisure are ultimately and, however, much disguised, spiritual factors. The artist who understands this, who can embody in his art the basic ideals of progress, will give the public "what it wants" in the best sense of the word, and in doing so he will find—much as he now be inclined to doubt it—that he is himself fulfilling his highest destiny.

E. Blampied

"Driving Home in the Rain"

(Dry Point)

(The Leicester Galleries)

Plate I

Raymond McIntyre

"Eve"

Plate II

William Shackleton

"The Shepherd"

Plate III

G. L. Brockhurst

"Anais"

(Cheniel Galleries)

Plate IV

J. D. Fergusson

"L'Amer"

(At Connell & Sons, 47 Bond St.)

Plate V

E. M. Henderson

(Chalk Drawing)

Plate VI

Augustus John

"Lady Tredegar"

Plate VII

C. R. W. Nevinson

"The Queue"

Plate VIII

Date Due

JAN 5 '86 SEP 29 '83			
OCT 13 '83			
NOV 28 '83 FEB 1 '84			
FEB 20 '84			

759.06
M34m

394

Marriott, Charles
Modern art...

The Columbus Gallery
of Fine Arts

COLUMBUS COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN LIBRARY
3 2223 000 31210 8